

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2119

FOR NEA/ARN/DRAPER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE, US

SUBJECT: BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

REF: STATE 056243

1. REYNOLDS AND MCCLEOD CAME TO SEE ME URGENTLY AT MID-DAY YESTERDAY, MARCH 8, WITH VERY LIVE FEARS FOR SECURITY OF MESHREF CAMPUS IN VIEW OF DEBBAS ATTACK AND PROBABILITY LAST AMERICAN AND FRENCH PROFESSORS LIVING THERE WOULD COME TO BEIRUT. THUS THE CAMPUS, WHICH DOES NOT HAVE ANY STUDENTS, WOULD BE OPEN TO LOOTERS AND POSSIBLY SQUATTERS. EQUIPMENT ON CAMPUS VALUED AT SOMETHING LIKE FORTY TO FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS.

2. I POINTED OUT TO REYNOLDS THAT ATTACK ON DEBBAS HAD MANY SIGNES OF BEING A PERSONAL MATTER. HOWEVER, I AGREED THAT IT WAS SILLY TO TAKE CHANCES WITH AMERICAN LIVES AND RELATIVELY SMALL AMOUNT OF PROPERTY INVOLVED AND CHANCES OF SQUATTERS MOVING IN A SOMEWHAT REMOTE POSSIBLITY. I HAD KNOWN THAT CAMPUS WAS TEMPORARILY OCCUPIED BY PALESTINIAN LFTIST TROOPS DURING DAMOUR BATTLE IN JANUARY AND THAT SECURITY WAFG OMEHOW BEING MAINTAINED BY RESIDUAL FORCES. REYNOLDS CLARIFIED THAT SECURITY OVER PAST FEW WEEKS HAS DEPENDED ON LOCAL COMMUNISTS AND JUMBLATT PSP PARTY MEMBERS IN THE AREA. THESE
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GROUPS WERE ALARMED AT DEBBAS ATTACK AND EXPRESSING

SELF DOUBTS ABOUT THEIR OWN ABILITY TO PROTECT THE AREA. NEVERTHELESS, IC' OWN EFFORTS OVER PAST MONTH TO GET MORE FORMAL SECURITY PROTECTION HAD SO FAR GONE UNREWARDED. IC WAS TRYING TO GET TO KARAME THROUGH A CONTACT.

3. I GOT THROUGH TO KARAME'S CHIEF OF CABINET WHO PROMISED TO REFER MATTER TO THE HIGHER MILITARY COMMITTEE ON OUR BEHALF. DATT HAS BEEN TRYING SINCE YESTERDAY THROUGH HIS OWN CHANNELS TO MAKE SURE MATTER IS REFERRED TO THAT COMMITTEE. IW WOULD NOW APPEAR THIS HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED SINCE REYNOLDS INFORMS ME THIS MORNING THAT HE HAS APPOINTMENT WITH BRIGADIER GENERAL HARRAKI OF GENDARMERIE TO DISCUSS SECURITY PROBLEM TOMORROW MORNING, MARCH 10TH. BEYOND THAT, IT WOULD APPEAR ADDITIONAL LOCAL INHABITANTS

OF MESHREF HAVE AGREED TO PROTECT THE CAMPUS ON VOLUNTEER BASIS FOR NEXT FEW DAYS AT LEAST AND TWO AMERICAN PROFESSORS HAVE DECIDED TO RETURN THERE AFTER THEIR PRECIPITATE DEPARTURE. THUS REYNOLDS IS CONSIDERABLY MORE RELAXED ABOUT THE PROBLEM TODAY AND WILL SO INFORM SCHULER THROUGH AUB TELEX FACILITIES.

4. FYI: GIVEN THAT DANGER WAS AT MOST TO SOME ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT, INTIAL ALARM MAY HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT EXCESSIVE YESTERDAY, PROBABLY AS A RESULT OF PERSONAL SHOCK IC STAFF GOT FROM BRUTAL AND APPARENTLY SENSELESS MURDER OF DEBBAS HOUSEHOLD WITH WHOM MANY MEMBERS OF THE STAFF HAD CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONS. SITUATION APPEARS IN DIFFERENT LIGHT TODAY AND, WHILE ONE CANNOT RULE OUT SOME LOOTING ANYWHERE IN THE LEBANON TODAY, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT SECURITY MEASURES UNDERTAKEN OR IN PROCESS ARE ABOUT ALL THAT ONE CAN EXPECT TO DO, GIVEN PRESENT-DAY REALITIES. END FYI.

5. ACCORDING TO REYNOLDS, THERE IS NO REPEAT NO PROSPECT OF THAT CAMPUS BEING REOPENED TO STUDENTS HIS SPRING. IC IS MAKING DO WITH ITS OTHER CAMPUS ADJACENT TO AUB AS WEL AS RENTING SOME ACS FACILITIES AND BORROWING AUB BUILDINGS. ITS SCHOOL ENROLLEMENT IS CONFIDENTIAL

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PRACTICALLY AS HIGH AS LAST YEAR, DUE TO MANY NEW ENROLLMENTS FROM OTHER SCHOOLS FLOCKING TO IT AS ONE OF THE SAFER PLACES TO STUDY, SO THAT ITS FINANCIAL SITUATION IS REASONABLY STEADY.

6. HAVE NO OBJECTION TO YOUR PASSING MOST OF THIS ALONG TO SCHULER ALTHOUGH I WOULD PREFERE YOUR KEEPING FYI REMARKS FOR YOUR OWN BACKGROUND.

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